

It is also known that, by reversing the polarity, [a] the formation of [a] the molten bath [is] may be varied."

Please delete the last paragraph of page 1 (beginning on line 27 and continuing on lines 1 and 2 of page 2) in its entirety.

Please amend the sentence beginning on line 4 of page 2, as follows:

"[A first] The lift-and-strike welding process is such that, as a first step, a surface of a component is cleaned, namely by applying a first voltage so as to strike an arc between [an element] a stud to be connected to the surface[~~, in particular a stud,~~] and the surface."

Please amend the sentence beginning on line 10 of page 2, as follows:

"[Said] This process is particularly suitable for use with both steel sheets and aluminum sheets, which have either an organic coating or [are] zinc-coated."

Please amend the sentence beginning on line 19 of page 2, as follows:

"The features described below are however also applicable to the welding of a corresponding steel [~~component, in particular a steel~~] sheet."

Please amend the sentence beginning on line 27 of page 2, as follows:

"By striking [an] a cleaning arc [~~as a cleaning arc~~], the effect is achieved that the organically based coating as a result of overheating by the arc volatilises leaving no significant residues, in particular leaving no residue, and/or is displaced from the welding region."

Please amend the third paragraph of page 7, beginning on line 21, as follows:

~~"[Besides the previously described features, the measures]~~ It is known in the prior art to use devices for controlling and/or regulating ~~[the weld stud which are known from DE 195 244 90 are moreover also applicable for effecting]~~ both the steel sheet and the aluminum lift-and-strike welding process. In particular, it has proved advantageous to use, for welding-on, stud geometrics of the ~~[type disclosed in DE 196 11 711]~~ various types known in the prior art. ~~[Express reference is hereby made to the respective technical teaching of both documents.]"~~

Please amend the first sentence of the last paragraph of page 7, beginning on line 28, as follows:

"An aluminum lift-and-strike welding apparatus is further provided in the present invention."

Please amend the description of the drawings, beginning on page 8, line 21, and continuing through line 4 of page 9, as follows:

"Fig. 1 shows a characteristic of a distance S and of an electric cleaning current I in a first step of the lift-and-strike welding process of the present invention;

Fig. 2 shows the characteristic of the distance S and of the electric current I in a welding step as a third step of the process of the present invention;

Fig. 3 shows a development in the form of a combination of the first step, a second step and the third step of the present invention;

Fig. 4 shows an embodiment of an apparatus for implementing the process of the present invention;

Fig. 5 shows a sketch of a diagrammatic embodiment of an [the] apparatus for implementing the process of the present invention;

Fig. 6 shows a circuit diagram of a polarity reversing means of the present invention; and

Fig. 7 shows a stud welded on a sheet having a coating."

Please amend the sentence beginning on line 14 of page 10, as follows:

"Reversal of the polarity from positive to negative in the second step is followed by the start of a lift-and-strike welding process [~~of the type disclosed e.g. also by the already cited DE 195 244 90~~].

Please add the following paragraph at the end of page 13, beginning on line 20:

"In general, the above identified embodiments are not to be construed as limiting the breadth of the present invention. It will be understood that modifications or other alternative constructions may become apparent within the scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims."

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend each of the following claims as indicated below:

1. A [First] lift-and-strike welding process, [wherein in a] comprising the first step of:
 - a. cleaning a surface (5) of a component [is cleaned] by applying a first voltage so as to strike an arc between [an element] a stud (4), [in particular a stud,] which is to be connected to the surface (5), and the surface (5)[,]; and
 - b. [in a second step a] reversing the polarity of the first voltage [is reversed and] wherein the [element] stud (4) is [then] welded [on] to the surface (5) by means of at least one arc struck by means of a second voltage.